

On The Green

A publication for Gallaudet University staff and faculty

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BOA to give input on Pre-College plans

Gallaudet's Board of Associates, at its biannual meeting on campus June 6, was asked to provide input on the goals and actions that have been adopted at Pre-College National Mission Programs to maintain Pre-College's role as a model for educating the nation's deaf and hard of hearing youth.

The BOA also was visited by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a public member of Gallaudet's Board of Trustees, who expressed his continued support for the University and its programs. (See related story.)

After an update on Pre-College's latest plans to fulfill its federal mandate as a national mission school, Dr. Bette Martin, special assistant for institutional affairs in the Office of the President, called upon the collective expertise of the BOA members for advice.

"We really need your help," Martin said to the group of noted business and philanthropic leaders. "What we want to know is, are we on target?"

Martin asked the board members

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McCain renews support for Gallaudet

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a public member of the University's Board of Trustees, took a break during Congress' work on the FY 1997 federal budget to visit the Board of Associates at its June 6 meeting in the Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center.

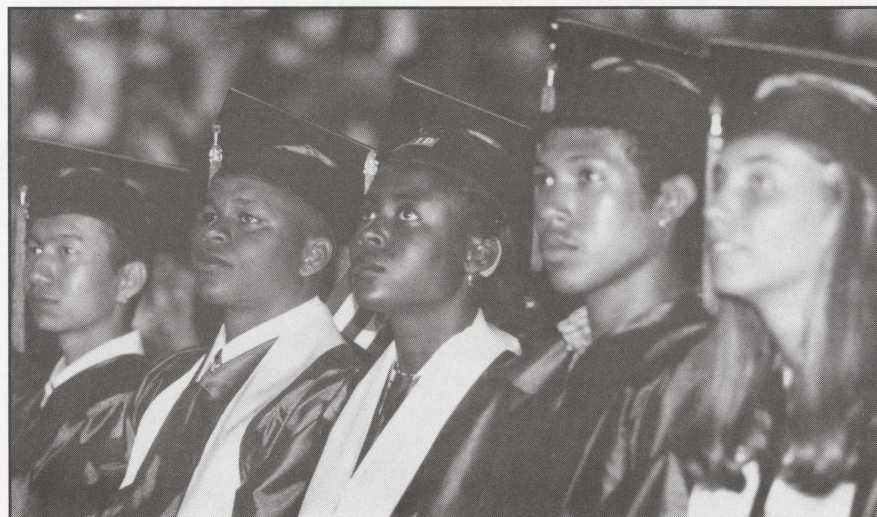
McCain told the group that it "can count on Congress' continued support of this University." He said that as Gallaudet continues its mission of offering the best programs possible for deaf and hard of hearing students, and as Pre-College National Mission Programs continues its efforts to serve as a model for other educational programs across the nation, "we can't afford to leave behind [Gallaudet's] programs or others that build a better society and a better nation."

Looking back to 1988—the year of the Deaf President Now movement, which McCain called one of the "heroic acts of history for people with disabilities"—he remembers that "to my surprise, there was not a single Senate office with a TTY." But with the help of Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), who McCain replaced on the Board of

Trustees, all Senate offices now have TTYs for deaf citizens to communicate with their representatives in Congress.

McCain also remembers when the Americans With Disabilities Act bill, which included legislation requiring all federal agencies to have TTYs, was hung up in the House of Representatives for procedural reasons. He spoke of Gallaudet students rallying on the steps of the Capitol and sitting outside the offices of their Congressional representatives, waiting to talk to them and urge their support for the bill. "Strangely enough, the bill passed in three days," said McCain. "It would not have happened without the participation of students of this unique University, and I am proud of their continued advocacy."

In conclusion, McCain told the BOA, "I am grateful for your participation. I know the quality of the people here. I think you are here for the same reason I am: You love and cherish all of our citizens and feel an obligation to and appreciation for Americans such as [President] I. King Jordan and the students here."



Graduates watch intently as Albert Couthen delivers MSSD's Commencement address.

MSSD celebrates 26th Commencement

In his opening remarks at MSSD's 26th Commencement exercises June 8, Albert Couthen confided that the moment "is like a homecoming for me to be back at Pre-College." Couthen, who is assistant principal of the Maryland School for the Deaf (Columbia), worked at KDES from 1977 to 1992—the last 10 years as assistant principal—and he recognized the faces of many of the 59 graduates from when they were KDES students.

Looking further back into his life, Couthen said that the MSSD Commencement reminded him of when he graduated from the American School for the Deaf 35 years ago. "It was one of the best experiences in my life," he recalled.

And it was a springboard that launched his distinguished career as an educator and a leader in the deaf community. Couthen attended Gallaudet and received his undergraduate degree in 1966. While he was a student at the University, he excelled in football and track. His athletic prowess led to a gold medal in the Deaf Olympics in 1965 and induction into Gallaudet's Hall of Fame in 1995. In the area of community service, Couthen is a former president of the D.C. area Black Deaf Advocates and presently serves as vice president of the National Black Deaf Advocates.

High School graduation is a moment to be cherished in everyone's family history, said Couthen. It is even more special when one considers the disturbing statistics which show that every nine seconds a young person drops out of school. "That makes you even more special for finishing," he told the graduates.

Couthen, who is a history buff, said that the letters in his favorite subject spell out a recipe for success in life: Humbleness, Incentive, Sacrifice, Testing, Opportunity,

Respect, and finally, You—a person's realization of self-worth and holding forth the ideal of treating others as they would be treated.

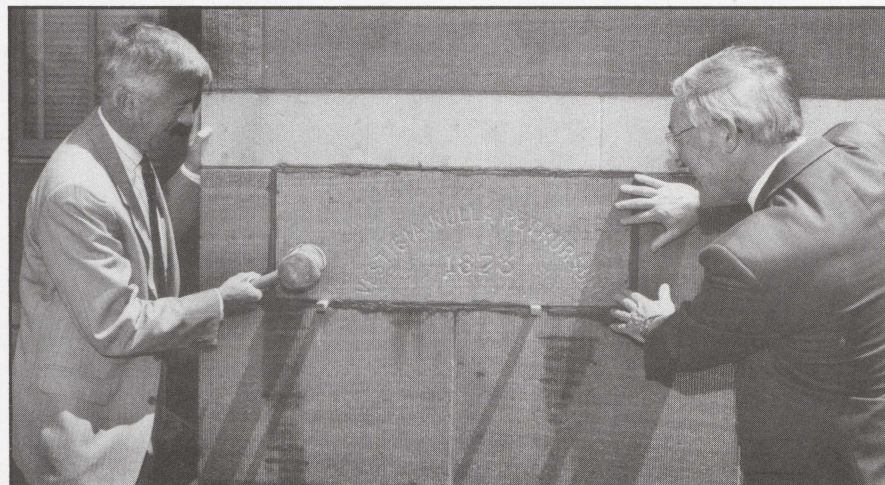
In closing, Couthen expressed hope that the graduates will return to MSSD to serve as role models.

Preceding Couthen's address, Gallaudet President I. King Jordan offered his congratulations to the graduates. Remarking on the Class of '96's theme: "Today we follow, tomorrow we lead," Jordan said, "This is true. Many of you will become leaders in the deaf community and around the world. But it is important to recognize that not everyone is a leader all the time. Strong followers are necessary for competent leaders to carry out their missions."

Looking out at his fellow graduates, valedictorian Anthony Riker said that their faces reflected many emotions—hope, anxiety, anticipation. "These feelings are normal," said Riker, "and I feel them as well." But although many of the graduates are uncertain about their futures, he said that their knowledge and the guidance of their parents and teachers can help to lead them.

Riker encouraged his classmates to

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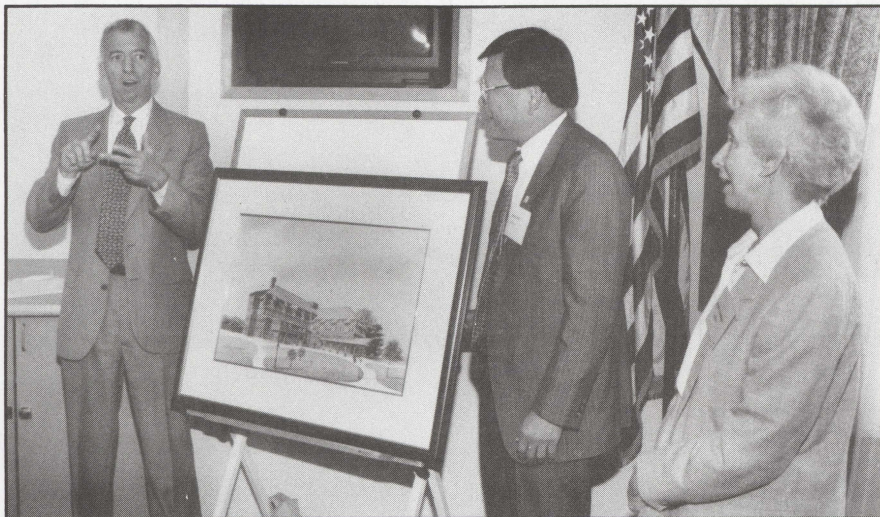


President Jordan sets the Chapel Hall cornerstone in place with help from Special Assistant to the President for Advocacy Jack Gannon at a May 30 ceremony to commemorate the completion of the stone restoration project. (The Latin phrase translates as "No stepping back," the motto of the Class of 1873.)



Social studies teacher Linda McCarty presents the Peter Hobbs Award to Amy Richardson.

Board of Associates holds biannual meeting on campus



President Jordan and John Yeh, Board of Associates chair and Board of Trustees member, unveil Geraldine Fineman's (right) painting of the Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center, which she presented to the University at the BOA's June 6 meeting. Mrs. Fineman, whose husband, Al Fineman, is a BOA member, has also donated her paintings of House One, Peikoff Alumni House, and College Hall to Gallaudet.

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to complete a written questionnaire soliciting opinions and suggestions on how to enhance Pre-College's plans. The BOA's comments will be reviewed and considered.

Earlier in the meeting, the board was provided an update on the overall scope of Pre-College's mission by Vice President for Pre-College National Mission Programs Jane Fernandes. The board also learned from three MSSD students about the National Vision Project, a survey of deaf and hard of hearing students ages 8 to 18 from across the country that was conducted by MSSD's leadership and introduction to communication classes.

Regarding the survey, the students—Tamara Suiter, a freshman, and Michael Taylor and Branic Keltz, juniors, informed the board that their classes mailed 35,000 questionnaires earlier this year to deaf and hard of hearing students in public and residential schools, asking the students what they would like to see their schools do to improve their education. They received approximately 2,500 responses—1,400 from students in mainstream programs and 1,100 from students in

residential programs.

The respondents revealed several recurring desires for enhancing their school experience: more challenging academic courses; more technology in the classroom; acceptance and respect for an individual's chosen mode of communication; more deaf role models; and sign language and deaf awareness courses offered for hearing people—particularly the deaf and hard of hearing students' families and friends.

The survey sparked considerable interest among the BOA members, who questioned the students at length about the survey and suggested that they share their findings. "I encourage you to take the results outside the deaf community to the hearing community," said Myra Peabody Gossens, president of Public Relations Washington for Ruder-Finn Communications of Washington, D.C. "It's very powerful, and we would be happy to help you get the word out."

Quoting former President George Bush, Dr. Fernandes began her update on Pre-College's objectives by saying, "Renaissance will not come without revolution. We must transform America's schools." She reinforced Bush's words by adding, "We need urgent action to change the state of education in schools for the deaf."

To achieve this, Pre-College has taken aim at critical areas that are essential for student success: literacy; preparation for the school-to-work transition; the family's role in enhancing classroom learning; the expectation of achievement for all students; and the search for excellence.

Of the five areas, literacy is perhaps the most important. Fernandes pointed out that because 95 percent of deaf children have hearing parents, communication often suffers. Because children are known to develop much stronger reading skills when their parents read to them, deaf children are often left out. To help overcome this, Pre-College has videotaped signed children's stories that are on loan to parents to encourage them to read to their children. Sign language tutors are also available to visit the parents in their homes each week to help them improve their signing. Next spring, said Fernandes, four sites will be chosen across the country to help develop the program nationally.

Fernandes also informed the BOA of programs designed to address the other areas. For example, to promote the teamwork skills that are so essential in the workplace, a pilot program is slated to begin this fall where children will be grouped by age and work together as a team on a daily basis. Pre-College also will step up its efforts to work with families in hopes of having them reinforce classroom lessons at home. To heighten academic expectations of all students, Pre-College faculty and staff will intensify their work with marginal achievers to help them reach their full potential. Lastly, Pre-College will search out and document the most successful educational programs for deaf and hard of hearing students in the nation.

Several BOA members discussed projects to promote education in school systems that they or their businesses are involved in. For example, Abe Pollin, owner of the Washington Bullets basketball team, talked about the "I Have A Dream Program" that he and a friend started in the Prince George's County, Md., public school system. Through the program, a group of fifth grade students who were at risk of dropping out of school were given the help and support they needed to stay in school. Today, 25 of them are in college. "My experience is the earlier you can reach these students, the better," said Pollin. "I'd start with second or third graders if we did it again."

Overall, the BOA members expressed support and encouragement for the direction that Pre-College National Mission Programs is taking.

"I think you are moving in the right direction," said Joel Orosz, coordinator of Philanthropy and Volunteerism for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, at the close of the meeting. Referring to Pre-College's emphasis on tutoring, teamwork, and parent involvement, Orosz said that Gallaudet is "ahead of the curve in what I've seen in most K-12 programs in responding to new realities." He added, "It also strikes me that there is tremendous ability in young deaf students and we have seen phenomenal success in peer tutoring. I think this could be a tremendous success."

D.E.A.F. Lecture series underway

The College for Continuing Education's 1996 Deaf Enrichment and Arts Festival Lecture Series began June 18 with a presentation on sociolinguistics issues in the deaf community by Dr. Barbara Kannapell. The schedule is as follows: (All lectures will be in Ely Auditorium, 4-5 p.m.)

June

20th—"Wild Zappers: The History of a Deaf Dance Troupe," Fred Beam, Zappers co-founder and director; 25th—"The Legal Challenges of Deafness," Jeffrey Rosen, EEOC attorney; 27th—"New Technology for Communication Access," Toby Silver, Distance Education coordinator, University Conference Management, CCE

July

2nd—"Certified Deaf Interpreters" Holly Roth, Center for ASL Literacy; 9th—"Challenges of Establishing a Deaf Theatre Company," Michelle Banks, founder/artistic director, Onyx Theatre; 11th—"Blessings and Challenges of Being a Deaf Woman in the '90s," Bridgetta Bourne-Firl, University Conference Management coordinator,



An MSSD grad gets hugs from juniors Diane Fleming (center) and Tchabbi Njie.

Graduation reflects many emotions

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set goals and to stick with them. "In this world, there is no substitute for patience, persistence, and hard work," he said.

Salutatorian Alicia Epstein referred to life as a series of labyrinths where the traveler must often retrace his or her steps or take a new direction to reach a destination. She extended her thanks to friends, teachers, counselors, and parents for bringing the graduates to this important milestone in life's passages.

Before diplomas were awarded, time was taken to recognize students for their outstanding achievements and to award gifts of appreciation.

MSSD's most prestigious award, a \$1,500 scholarship given in memory of Peter B. Hobbs, an MSSD teacher and principal who died in 1987, went this year to Amy Richardson. Richardson and 16 other graduates were also recognized for academic excellence.

The senior gift to the school, a patchwork quilt embroidered with "Class of '96" was presented to interim principal Vivian Rice. The graduates also presented gifts to class sponsors Phyllis Brooks, Brian Bippus, Jennifer McMillan, and Patrick Atunah.

The graduates also took the opportunity to celebrate in song. As senior Ben Reynolds played "That's What Friends are For" on the piano, his fellow graduates swayed in rhythm, hand-in-hand.

When the diplomas were presented, each of the graduates, upon acceptance of his or her diploma, expressed words of love and appreciation to those closest to them on this special day in their lives.

Classified Ads

FOR SALE: Moving, everything must go! furniture, clothes, toys, etc., all very cheap. Call (301) 794-7145 (V/TTY) or e-mail MLGARNER.

FOR RENT: Mobile home in Fenwick Island, Del., near Ocean City, sleeps 4-6, 2-BA, AC, W/D, DW, kitchen, pool access, \$65/night, 1-2 nights, \$60/night, 3 nights, \$55/night, 4 nights, \$50/night, 5-plus nights. Call Dwight, x5255, or e-mail ADBENEDICT.



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